

SHORT COURSE DETAILS

WE6672 WRITING FICTION – HOW TO CREATE AN ENGAGING PLOT

Tutor: LESLEY THOMSON AND ELLY GRIFFITHS

Dates: WEEKEND FRIDAY 13 JANUARY – SUNDAY 15 JANUARY

ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

And then what happened? How to create an engaging plot.

What makes a reader want to read on? What keeps them turning the pages? The plot. This course examines the building blocks that go towards writing an absorbing and fulfilling plot. Elly Griffiths and Lesley Thomson, experienced and successful writers, show you how a considered-plotted story can bring an idea to life. Using examples from their own novels and from other writers, they will demonstrate the role that suspense, structure and storyline play in creating a plot, and how events, dramatic episodes – even mundane action – can, if logically ordered, create cogent drama.

Working collaboratively and individually, drawing on visual stimuli from photographs, you will invent plotlines. You will discover how a sequence of linked scenes sets up questions that the reader wants answered.

By the end of the course you will understand how an intriguing plot can help you create an engaging story.

Tutors will be referring to their books over the course of the weekend which you may like to read but it's not necessary.

The Detective's Daughter by Lesley Thomson and *The Crossing Places* by Elly Griffiths

LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

A subject focused course that is delivered to suit any level of experience from beginner to advanced practitioner. A structured start is followed by guided independent practice.

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Lesley Thomson grew up in London. Her novel *A Kind of Vanishing* won The People's Book Prize in 2010. *The Detective's Daughter*, published in 2013, sold over 400,000 copies and is Sainsbury's Ebook 2013. *Ghost Girl*, the second in The Detective's Daughter series, out in 2014, is another bestseller. Lesley is currently writing about Stella Damell's fourth case, *The Detective's Secret*, (2015), was Sainsbury's Book of the Week. The fourth in The Detective's Daughter series, *The House With No Rooms* was published in 2016. It was Sainsbury's book of the week in April. Lesley is an associate tutor on West Dean's Creative Writing MA.

Elly Griffiths is the author of the highly successful Ruth Galloway crime novels ('wonderfully rich' The Guardian, 'highly atmospheric' New York Times). The first in the series, *The Crossing Places*, won the Mary Higgins Clark Award and three books have been shortlisted for the Theakston's Crime Novel of the Year. The eighth book, *The Woman in Blue*, was published in February 2016. Elly also writes the Stephens and Mephisto series set in the theatrical world of the 1950s. The third book in that series, *The Blood Card*, will be published in November 2016. Elly has three times been shortlisted for the CWA Dagger in the Library Award. Elly is associate tutor on West Dean's Creative Writing MA.

TIMETABLE:

Arrival day: Friday 13 January

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| From 4.00pm | Arrival for residential students |
| 6.45pm | Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner |

Arrival day continued: Friday 13 January

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| 7.00pm | Dinner |
| 8.00pm–9.00pm | First teaching session – attendance is an essential part of the course. Introductions. Outline of the weekend. Students will be asked to introduce a book where the plot has made a particular impact on them. At the end of the weekend we will have compiled a reading list of recommended books. |

Other days: Saturday 14 January

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| 9.15am | Morning classes start. Starting to Plot. What is dramatic? |
| 10.30am | Coffee |
| 11.00am | Morning classes continue. The plot thickens: character as plot, delay the drama. |
| 12.45pm | Lunch |
| 2.00pm | Afternoon classes. Pitfalls and plotheoles. How to create a coherent plot. |
| 3.30pm | Tea |
| 4.00pm | Afternoon classes continue Extended writing exercise. |
| 5.00pm | Classes finish |
| From 6.30pm | Dinner |
| | Please Note: non-residential students should book dinner for Saturday night either in advance with the Bookings Office or with Reception on arrival. |
| 8.00pm | Sharing writing and feedback. |

Departure day: Sunday 15 January

(Residential students to vacate rooms by 10am)

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| 9.15am | Morning classes start. Weaving the strands. The role of the secondary storyline and its impact on the major drama. |
| 10.30am | Coffee |
| 11.00am | Morning classes continue. In short this is about...Why will people want to read your story? |
| 12.45pm | Lunch |
| 2.00pm | Afternoon classes Guest author and questions |
| 3.00pm | Classes finish |
| 3.30pm | Tea then departure |

MATERIALS FOR YOUR COURSE:

We have a generously stocked craft shop, which opens daily from 8.30am–2pm.

For any materials you need to purchase from the shop, we suggest you do so during the first morning of your course, after having discussed with your tutor.

Available from the Shop:

Notebook, pencils and pens

Please bring any of the above, if you have them, and in addition:

A laptop if you use one – you will be asked to do an extended piece of writing so may prefer to bring a laptop for this exercise.

Students also have access to PCs in the IT Suite or the Library.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

The tutor instructs students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. There are no health and safety restrictions on access to this studio/teaching space in the absence of the tutor. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.